

the right direction each day. I am grateful to know that someone like Djounedou Titikpina is working in with and for our residents each day, and am proud to call him a fellow public servant.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring Djounedou Titikpina for his consistently remarkable dedication to public service.

NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH AND NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY

HON. DAVE CAMP

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Mr. CAMP. Mr. Speaker, this November, I am proud to celebrate National Adoption Month and also National Adoption Day, an important time to recognize those wonderful parents who have adopted children in need of a permanent, loving home. It's also a time to remind ourselves of the thousands of children across the country who still remain in foster care, waiting for a family to call their own.

Earlier this year, I was honored to recognize Midland County Probate Judge Dorene Allen as the 2014 Angel in Adoption award recipient from my district. In her 14 years as a judge, she has finalized nearly 700 adoptions, and through this and her prior work she has dedicated her career to serving Michigan's most vulnerable children. There are many incredible advocates like Judge Allen around the country, and I am grateful for their efforts and for the opportunity we have to recognize them today.

Adoption is not something I'm speaking about just today, but something I have focused on throughout my career in private practice as well as my years in Congress. As an attorney before coming to Congress, I worked with parents and children in the foster care system. In Congress, I have been privileged to meet many adoption advocates as well as youth who have benefitted from adoption. Those sorts of experiences provided much of the background for legislation I have helped craft that has contributed to the landmark changes in adoption policy Congress has approved in recent years.

In 1997, my colleagues and I on the Ways and Means Committee crafted the Adoption and Safe Families Act. That legislation streamlined the adoption process to help more children in foster care quickly move into permanent adoptive homes. It also, for the first time, offered incentives to states to safely increase the number of children adopted from foster care.

It worked. In the decade following that legislation, the number of U.S. children adopted from foster care increased by 71 percent. In the years since, adoptions have continued to remain higher even as the foster care caseload started to decline. Overall, almost 300,000 children have been adopted as a result of the increase in adoptions starting in 1997. One study estimated the federal government saved \$1 billion over eight years by ensuring children were adopted instead of remaining in foster care.

In 2001, I worked with my colleagues to pass the historic 2001 tax relief package that expanded the adoption tax credit to \$10,000,

easing the financial burden of adopting a child. In 2012, we made the adoption tax credit permanent.

In 2003, President George W. Bush signed into law my legislation, the Adoption Promotion Act, to create new financial incentives for states that increase adoptions of older children from foster care.

In 2008 as part of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act, my proposal to provide equitable access to foster care and adoption services for Indian children in tribal areas became law. This allowed tribal governments to receive funding to administer adoption and foster care programs directly.

And just this year—after many months of hearings, public comment, and bipartisan work between the House and Senate—the President signed into law the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act. This law is designed to reduce child sex trafficking as well as increase adoptions, including among the hardest-to-place children.

Together, these efforts have resulted in more children living in loving, adoptive families. I am grateful for the support I have received from my colleagues in these efforts during my time in Congress, and I am grateful that today we can recognize and honor the most important people in this process—the parents who adopt children, the children who have been adopted, and those children still searching for a loving family.

Children in foster care deserve a place to call home, not for a few months or years, but for good. We have already seen great progress in increasing adoptions in recent years, and I hope that we will continue to see progress in the years ahead.

HONORING COLONEL ROY PLUMMER

HON. LYNN A. WESTMORELAND

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, today I would like to honor one of Columbus, Georgia's finest leaders: Colonel Roy Plummer. Colonel Roy Plummer is retiring as a Director of Army Instruction for the Muscogee County School District JROTC where he is responsible for eight high school JROTC programs and four other county JROTC programs. From 1998 to the present he has dedicated his efforts toward creating a formidable district-level JROTC program which has grown from 400 cadets early in his tenure to a current operating enrollment of 1200 cadets. His partnership with the high school principals in moving JROTC forward in terms of relevancy and as an enhancer to each high school's vision has been extremely successful. Under Colonel Plummer's mentorship, the Muscogee County School District JROTC has earned GHSA State Rifle Championships, State-level awards in drill team and raider competitions, and honorable recognition in the annual JROTC Academic Bowl.

Colonel Plummer is the Senior Pastor, Founder and CEO of Faith Tabernacle Community Church in Columbus since its inception in October 1994. He had finished his Active Duty Army career as the Chief of Chaplains of

Fort Benning, Georgia prior to his retirement. He also currently serves as the Chaplain for Rotary International District 6900, Columbus, Georgia. He has served on numerous Boards as both a chairman and as a member: St. Francis Hospital Foundation, Columbus Hospice, United Way, Boy Scouts of America and the Columbus Chamber of Commerce are but a few.

Colonel Plummer served as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Counseling Graduate Studies at Columbus State University. He has earned a baccalaureate in Biblical Literature, Masters of Arts in Human Relations & Group Process and Guidance & Counseling, a Masters of Divinity in Pastoral Care, and a Doctorate in Divinity. This solid educational background and his benevolence inspired Colonel Plummer to create the Plummer Home for homeless and disenfranchised military veterans.

A native of May Penn, Clarendon Parrish, Jamaica, Colonel Roy Plummer is a leader, pastor and friend to many; and the father to four daughters and seven grandchildren. He will share with you that "The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?" To Roy Plummer and the endless contributions he has made to JROTC, the Muscogee County School District, and the Columbus community, we say "Thanks a Million!"

HONORING GEORGE ALLEN ORTIZ

HON. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Ms. MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Albuquerque resident George Allen Ortiz for his honorable military service in the United States Marine Corps.

George Allen Ortiz, affectionately known as "Al", was born in the northern New Mexico town of Raton. At the ripe age of 17, Al began his service in the Vietnam War. He would honorably serve his country from February 28, 1964 to February 16, 1970 in the First Marine Division at battles that ensued in the South Vietnam city of Da Nang.

I had the pleasure of personally meeting with Al on Veteran's Day to thank him for his dedicated service to the United States of America. In that wonderful moment I could sense Al's burning pride and fervent patriotism. It reminded me of the countless individuals, throughout history, who fought tirelessly to preserve the guiding principles and enduring freedoms of our country. Al's commitment to the preservation of these pursuits and our country's continued success is unwavering.

Al was recently diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, a result of the risks that American soldiers face when they step onto the battlefield. He has the wonderful support of Cathy, his wife of 45 years, daughter Tamra and six grandchildren who love him dearly. Like a true soldier, he is always thinking about the young Americans who are currently making sacrifices to defend the United States. At age 65, Al still talks about his desire to travel overseas to help our brave men and women as they courageously engage in combat.

It is heroes like Al who make our country great. He is a man of great integrity, revered

by his family, friends and community. I would like to take this moment to thank Al for his service, his sacrifice, and his steadfast devotion to the great state of New Mexico and the United States of America.

RECOGNIZING JACK D. BALLARD
AND THE U.S. CAPITOL POLICE

HON. NICK J. RAHALL II

OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, all of us who work on Capitol Hill owe a tremendous debt to the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police. One of my constituents, Jack D. Ballard of Greenbrier County, wrote to me to share some of his own memories and about the friendships he forged during his tenure on the force of Capitol Hill's finest. His late father, Leonard H. Ballard Jr., who retired as an inspector after 38 years on the force instructed Jack that, "on Capitol Hill, you can be struck by lightning when there isn't a cloud in the sky." That's sound advice from a seasoned voice for everyone on the Hill.

Jack worked with many fellow West Virginians during his tenure on Capitol Hill, including Emery "Bud" Aliff, Donald Shumate, Jimmie Young, Lenvil Young, Charles Farmer, William Harrah, William Hall, and Lt. Colonel Jervis. Jack found a common trait among these West Virginians, they all worked together to get the job done.

Mr. Speaker, we all ought to celebrate that common thread of the "can do" spirit that weaves throughout the hills of West Virginia and throughout our Nation. It is a trait that has and can continue to serve our Nation well.

RECOGNIZING BROWN'S CIGAR
STORE

HON. TOM REED

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Mr. REED. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Brown's Cigar Store on its 125th anniversary. Located in the historic Gaffer District of Corning, New York, Brown's Cigar Store has proudly served the community since 1889.

Brown's Cigar Store is locally owned and operated by the Smith family. As experienced tobacconists, Sue, Terry, and Bejay Smith use their knowledge and expertise to carry on the strong, time honored tradition of tobacconist culture.

At the turn of the twentieth century, local patrons would visit Brown's to get a haircut, purchase a steamship ticket, and converse about the latest news. Although the products and services have changed over the years, the sense of camaraderie remains as strong today as when the store first opened its doors to the Corning community. Today, the store offers its guests the opportunity to step back in time, to an era when friends and neighbors would gather to discuss family, sports, politics, and national news. Patrons of Brown's experience a warm and friendly atmosphere, where the

finest tobacco products and friendliest smiles are always in stock.

I once again congratulate Brown's Cigar Store on 125 years of success. As a small family-owned business in my home town, I am proud to recognize this impressive milestone.

HONORING STEPHANIE ARTHUR

HON. JOSÉ E. SERRANO

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Mr. SERRANO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure and admiration that I stand before you today to honor Ms. Stephanie A. Arthur, MPA for her dedication to advocacy and working to improve access for members of the African community in New York.

Stephanie Arthur is the Founder of the African Leadership Project, which is a civic training organization that provides a leadership pipeline for various professions. The overarching goal of the African Leadership Project is to foster and develop the talent of individuals within African communities, and match these individuals to key leadership opportunities throughout the community.

Ms. Arthur is a very accomplished individual. She is an alumna of the Women's Campaign School at Yale University, The White House Project, Eleanor's Legacy, Coro Leadership Center of New York, and the Center for American Women and Politics. Having gained tremendous experience and knowledge of the political realm over the years, Ms. Arthur has worked on several high-profile elections ranging across all levels of government, and is respected as a grassroots activist across the nation. As a first generation Ghanaian-American and important voice in the African Diaspora, Ms. Arthur has continuously taken her many acquired skills and used them to amplify the voice of the African community at large.

Today, Stephanie Arthur serves as the political strategist and Founder of S. Arthur Group, LLC, which is a boutique public affairs and government relations consultancy. Ms. Arthur continues to be a fierce advocate for immigrant rights, for the advancement of criminal justice policy, for gender equality, and for many other social justice issues that are important to all of our community's residents.

Ms. Arthur's dedication to working with civic organizations, individuals, and figures in public office speaks to her natural ability to build coalition of support for issues that matter to all of us, and it is this dedication and ability to lead that makes her such a valuable asset in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I respectfully ask that you and my other distinguished colleagues join me in honoring Stephanie Arthur for her consistently remarkable dedication to public service.

TRIBUTE TO DR. JULIAN CROCKER

HON. KEVIN MCCARTHY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, November 20, 2014

Mr. MCCARTHY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of the outstanding

public service of Dr. Julian Crocker, longtime educator, superintendent and public servant. Julian plans to retire this January after fifty years as a scholastic leader, a fixture of the San Luis Obispo County public school system.

Born and raised in Tennessee, Julian matriculated at Vanderbilt University and joined the United States Army shortly after graduating. On the completion of his term of service, Captain Crocker settled in sunny San Mateo, California in 1964, where he began to teach high school. Julian also earned a doctorate in Educational Administration from Harvard University in 1972, and upon returning to San Mateo, was appointed principal.

A renaissance man to the core, Julian recognized early in his career that education represented only the last, most public component of childhood development. All his professional life, he strove to unite broad coalitions of businesses, nonprofits and local government offices to improve housing and medical care for young and poor children.

Julian spent twenty one years as superintendent of different school districts in California—in San Mateo, Palo Alto and eventually Paso Robles. In 1999, he was elected County Superintendent of Schools for San Luis Obispo, in which capacity he has worked ever since. Under his tenure, San Luis Obispo expanded its charter school system, enlarged its English proficiency program, and founded the Grizzly Academy—an innovative boarding school for at-risk youth—in partnership with the California National Guard. These are but a few of his many accomplishments on behalf of his community.

Julian acquired a wealth of experience and knowledge from his years of service, a foundation of wisdom which I have often relied upon throughout the years, either by seeking his counsel directly or in meeting him and other County Superintendents to discuss educational needs on the Central Coast. I could always count on straight talk and sound advice—advice I took back with me to the halls of Congress.

In fact, in his office, Julian kept a framed quotation above his desk—one of my favorite Presidential quotes as it happens, from one of my favorite presidents: Theodore Roosevelt. It reads: "It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly . . ." Julian's arena has been the classroom, where he has lived that phrase, educating our students, expanding our curriculum, fighting to ensure students have the resources they need.

In this next chapter of his life, I know Julian is looking forward to spending more time with his wife, Donna, his children, and his six grandchildren. While the next County Superintendent of Schools for San Luis Obispo has large shoes to fill and Julian's presence will be missed, I know he will always remain involved on the issues important to him. I thank Julian for his friendship and counsel, and his leadership to improve education in California, and wish him and Donna all the best.